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Watson's Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DEC. 21, 1867.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, CLINTON HALL, ASTOR PLACE.

The New York Philharmonic Society will give their second concert of the 26th season, this evening, at the Academy of Music. The programme is in every way admirable, comprising the following pieces: Symphony in C, Schubert, Concerto for piano in F minor, Weber, Miss Alide Topp; Overture, Otello, first time, Ritter; Fantasia—Ruin of Athens, F. Liszt—Miss Alide Topp; Overture, "Calm sea and happy voyage," Mendelssohn. Mr. Carl Bergmann will conduct. There is every indication that there will be a brilliant and crowded house this evening.

Miss Jenny Busk, the charming and talented American singer, will give a farewell concert on Monday evening next, Dec. 23d, at Irving Hall. She will be assisted by Mr. Leopold de Meyer, Mr. Wenzel Kopton, Mr. W. J. Hill, and Mr. Colby. We have written of Miss Jenny Busk as an excellent artist, and our opinion has been confirmed by her recent performances. She is a thoroughly educated artist; she has a beautiful voice, a pure method, and sings with passion and expression. Under ordinary circumstances, she would have commanded the attention of the public and the press, but she appeared under every disadvantage, and only emerged from the cloud by the sheer force of native ability. We hope that Miss Jenny Busk will be greeted on Monday evening by a crowded audience, when we are satisfied that she will sustain the position we have claimed for her.

Bristow's New Oratorio—"Daniel." The New York Mendelssohn Union will give George F. Bristow's new Oratorio of "Daniel" on Saturday evening, the 28th instant. The solo parts will be sustained by Madame Parepa-Rosa, Miss Hutchings, Mr. W. J. Hill, Mr. H. Frost and Mr. J. R. Thomas. The choruses have been rehearsed faithfully, and we expect that under the direction of the composer the performance will be a very fine one, and that the success of the work will be assured.

Ristori, the great tragedienne, will return here, and will give a few representations of her great character, Marie Antoinette, at the French Theatre, commencing Monday, Dec. 30. The sale of tickets will commence on Monday, the 23d inst., at Schirmer's, 701 Broadway. Madame Ristori can only appear for a few nights, as her engagements compel her to be in Havana in January, 1868. Those who have not yet witnessed her personation of Marie Antoinette, should take advantage of the present opportunity.

The last days of "La belle Duchesse" are drawing to a close, as she proposes to migrate to a colder and a fogger latitude—Massachusetts. Her place will be at once supplied by another of Offenbach's beauties—"La belle Hélène," who has turned the heads of half Europe, and who will undoubtedly assert the same powerful fascination here. Madlle. Tostee will personate the heroine, and how charming and fascinating she is, is too well known to need any confirmation. But the Duchesse will remain with us yet another week, and as we believe in the old maxim, It is better to be off with the old before we are on with the new, we advise our friends to attend upon the Duchesse, and to crowd her levees nightly.

Pike's Opera House will be inaugurated on Monday evening, January the 6th, by the La Grange and Brignoli Italian Opera troupe, which, under the direction of Max Maretzek, will be full and effective in all its details. The Opera House itself is a beautiful structure, rich and elegant in every particular, roomy and commodious, and its means of ingress and egress are superior to any place of amusement in the city. We shall be surprised if this new and liberal enterprise does not strike out at once a career of brilliant success.

Carhart & Needham, whose parlor organs and melodeons are unequalled for the beauty of their tone and perfect finish, have at present in their warerooms a large stock of those beautiful instruments, of every style and size and of every price. Among them are some small organs exquisitely finished in ebony and gold, which are as handsome in appearance as they are rich and fine in their tone. As holiday presents, we have seen nothing more worthy of consideration, for they are both useful and ornamental, and are literally an investment worth making. It will repay a visit to listen to their superb large reed organs, which we think are to-day the finest specimens in the world, purer, richer, and more organ-like in their quality of tone than any reed instrument ever manufactured. We invite the attention of our readers to their fine instruments, and advise a visit to Carhart & Needham's Manufactory and Ware-rooms, 143-5 and 7, East Twenty-third street.

—M. Oscar Comettant has been blowing a trumpet in a new way, and poetizing over the music of the Savages of America and the Japanese. Perhaps it might have been some of their music he favored us with when he visited America, a few years since, and of course not being savages we did not understand or appreciate the efforts of M. Comettant. It was hardly necessary to go so far back to find out the age of bronze, when he could have personally illustrated the age of brass, without any research whatever.

OLE BULL.

We were surprised and delighted a few days since by a visit from our old and esteemed friend, Ole Bull. It was a surprise, complete; because, first, we believed him to be in Russia; secondly, the Press of the world had announced him dead and had duly buried him with every honor; and, thirdly, we read that he was in half-a-dozen cities of Germany and France, at the same moment. Consequently, as he was in heaven, where all good Christians go, and every terrestrial place at the same time, he could not possibly be in America. Nevertheless, we saw him before us, felt his warm northern hug and the hearty grasp of his hand, and were satisfied that wherever else he might be, he was certainly in our office, in the body and in the best of spirits. Time has dealt with him most unfavorably, for it has denied him the usual privilege of looking old. He looks younger to-day than when we last saw him a dozen years ago. His massive frame is still tall and erect—his step is firm and elastic, and his intelligence as clear and vigorous, as when he made his first bow to an American audience at the Park Theatre, twenty-five years ago. And above all, his smile is still as true and genial as ever, proving that the heart has lost none of those kind and generous impulses which of old dictated a thousand generous actions, which have made the man loved and respected throughout the whole country.

As a man we find him unchanged, save inasmuch as the heavy troubles and afflictions which darkened his life in the past, being passed away, he is a hundred times more hopeful, contented and free in spirit—mentally and morally a new man. As an artist he is head and shoulders above his former stature. His tone is larger and grander, and his power over the character of the instrument is simply extraordinary. There are really no difficulties in the violin to him—those he mastered long ago—but we find him now far more matured; his thoughts are more connected; his execution and intonation more clear and positive, and in passionate expression his delivery is broader, and more refined and intensified. His style is as fresh and vigorous as when, thirty years ago, he followed Paganini to England, and won success after success in the very footsteps of that marvellous performer. Such is Ole Bull to-day, and as we listened to his wonderful mastery of the soul of the violin, we felt satisfied that his career in this country will be more brilliant, than at any period of his eventful life.

A few words as to the lapse of time between his last and his present visit to this country.

Ole Bull left this country in September, 1837. When he arrived in Bergen, his native

city, he found that the artists in the Theatre, which he founded in 1849,—were in a state of disorganization; he took charge of the management and conducted the orchestra himself, for the purpose of extricating it from the difficulty into which it had fallen during his absence in this country. After settling the difficulties, he gave the theatre to the city, in order that it might be taken care of as a municipal institution, and settled down upon his estate to enjoy a little repose; but an artist like Ole Bull, whose whole soul is rapt up in the divine art, could not long remain quiet; he became restive, the old desire for fame returned, and he once more put on his musical harness and proceeded to Vienna, the scene of his former triumphs, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Since that time he has been—with the exception of a few months in each year, which he spent with his family,—traveling through the continent of Europe, performing in all the principal cities, and meeting everywhere with the same enthusiastic reception as in times of yore. It was during one of these tours, and while he was giving concerts in Russia, that the startling announcement was flashed through the country that Ole Bull—the great violinist, one whose name was a household word, and who had held for so many years, thousands of his audiences, as it were, spell-bound by the magic touch of his marvelous hand,—had arrived very mysteriously at Quebec, and was dead. Dead! was it possible that we should not hear again those wonderful tones that none but Ole Bull could produce, was he at last freed from all the turmoil and troubles which had surrounded him for so many years? Alas! it was feared it was too true. Many were the tears that were shed by those who were most intimately connected with him and who knew his worth; the Press throughout the country had obituary notices of him; the musical profession also deplored the loss of one who was an ornament to the profession, but, in spite of all this, we are glad to be able to state that Ole Bull is not dead, but is as full of the old fire as in times gone by, and, if anything, more so. As we said before, we had the pleasure of a visit from him the other day, and instead of looking ten years older, he is ten years younger.

It was on the day of his supposed death that he was performing one of those noble deeds of charity which have endeared him in the hearts of all who know him. He had been giving concerts in Moscow, when it came to his ears that the poor students had placed themselves under the ban of the Russian Government, in consequence of one of their number having made an attack upon the life of the Emperor; they had also revolted, but were anxious to seek forgiveness. Ole Bull, in the largeness of his heart, tendered the students a concert for

the benefit of their poorer brethren. But in order to do so it was necessary to obtain the consent of the General Director of all the Imperial theatres, who was at St. Petersburg. Ole Bull telegraphed, and obtained his consent. He composed a national piece terminating with the national hymn in which over two hundred of the students and a large orchestra assisted, Ole Bull playing the variations.

Before commencing the hymn, the Committee of Students stepped forward to the front of the orchestra and presented him with a music stand of solid silver, upon which they placed the score of the music composed in their honor.

After the concert was over, the students, some five hundred in number, with Ole Bull at their head, marched through the streets to the Governor's residence, singing the Hymn composed for the occasion, and also the Russian national melodies. Upon arriving at the Governor's residence, who, upon being presented with the petition of the student, asking to be restored to the good-will of the Emperor, and promising to be true and loyal, shed tears of sympathy, and stated that he had no doubt when he presented it to the Emperor and informed him of the occasion, that he would be alike affected and would grant an ukase giving back all the privileges that they had been deprived of. The Emperor did all the Governor promised, and, in addition, gave the students the privilege during the season of Lent, of giving concerts for their own especial benefit.

Ole Bull arrived here on the steamer *Russia*, last Wednesday, as mysteriously as he was supposed to have arrived at Quebec; and, as he quaintly expresses it, just to let his friends see that he was not dead. It is his intention to proceed to Chicago forthwith and to visit some of the Norwegian settlements, and to look after the condition of his own countrymen. During his stay in the West he will give some concerts, and return to New York about the beginning of March. His present purpose is to return to Europe in May, but we are sure that there is not a city or town in the United States but would give him the same enthusiastic reception for "Auld Lang Syne," so that his stay may be more prolonged than he, at the present time, anticipates.

Like every true Northern man Ole Bull is strong in his attachments; he never forgets his friends, but turns to them as naturally as the Switzer turns to his home. True to this sentiment, his first visit was to his old business manager, Mr. F. Widdows, who carried him through his two last tours successfully, to whom he at once tendered the business management of his concerts during his stay in America. By this act Ole Bull has secured a competent and faithful business

agent, and has escaped the vortex of the inevitable "ring," which was ready to swallow him up, body, boots and breeches, and leave not a rap behind. Ole Bull, "go on thy way rejoicing." Thou great Norse giant, strong in thews and sinews, and strong in brain and hand, with more youth in each than when we shook thy hand (Q! the grip!) a dozen years ago. Go thine own way, and thy success is assured.

We shall not possibly hear this great violinist for some months in public, but when he does come, we believe that New York will give him right royal welcome.

WHAT THE THEATRES ARE DOING.

One of the most unpleasant items in the career of a dramatic critic is that in which there is no items.

We hope this proposition is fairly understood; if not, we will put it in other language, which is, that while the public expect a weekly record of novelties in the theatrical line, the managers fail to furnish the writer with something to say. The week has been unproductive of novelty, save only in the case of the Broadway Theatre. At this house Mrs. D. P. Bowers, who is at this moment the finest sensational actress on the American stage, has produced Charles Reade's fine domestic drama of "Dora," taken from Tennyson's famous pastoral poem. The poem and the play being both familiar, we will enter upon no further description than to say that the heroine was beautifully rendered by Mrs. Bowers, and the public have shown their appreciation by crowding the house nightly.

At the Fifth Avenue Theatre, "Ye Grand Queen Bess" is still running to full houses. We would like to say something good about the play itself, but cannot conscientiously. It lacks the funny element sadly, and only shows what music and a really nice company can do for an author's short-comings. There is something irresistibly droll in Leffingwell's "Queen Bess," and what he adds to the author is really the fun of the piece. His make-up is capital and sets his audience on the broad grin before he opens his mouth. Add to this several pretty women in the persons of Mrs. Watkins, Miss Millie Sackett, Mrs. Leffingwell, and others, and Mr. Falconer's burlesque has certainly had from the management all the care it deserves. The music is from the Duchess, and is made doubly droll by its accompaniments.

The play is an undoubted success as far as attracting the public goes, and we feel glad to know that such full houses have fallen to the share of the enterprising management.

At Wallack's during the week they have been producing such charming comedies as *The Rivals*, *Town and Country*, and *The Belle's Stratagem*, each mounted as only